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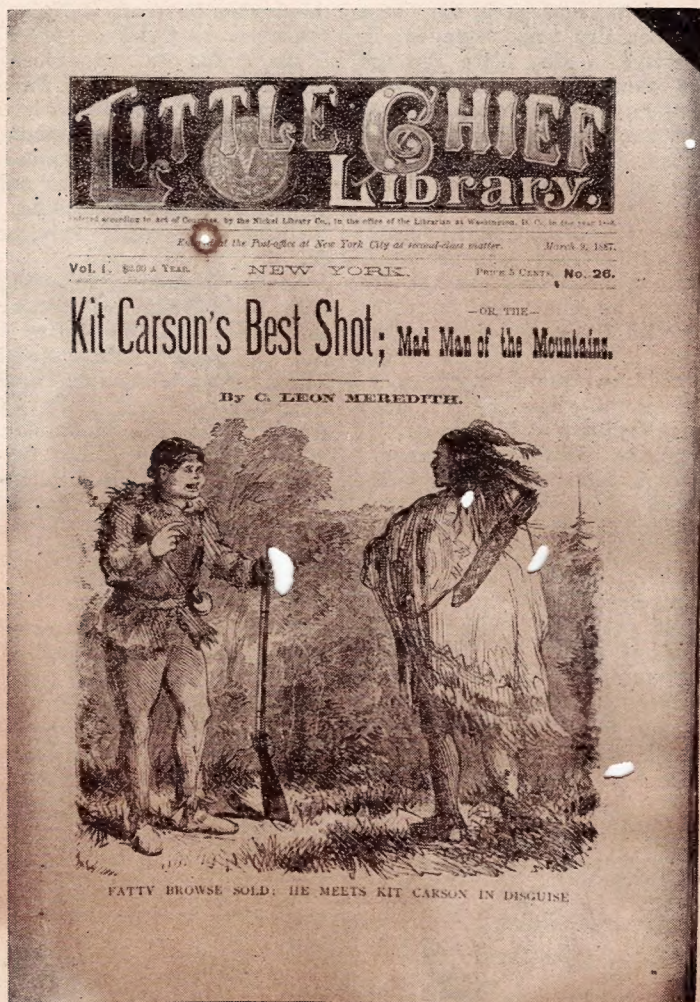
DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 21 No. 3

March 1953

Whole Number 246



Photography courtesy Charles Duprez. Novel loaned by Ralph F. Cummings.

BUCKSKIN MEN OF FOREST AND PLAIN

By J. Edward Leithead

PART I

The adventurous lives of four celebrated frontiersmen, Boone, Crockett, Carson and Cody, spanned overlapping periods in the settlement of our westward-moving frontier. They and their associates were all Indian-fighters, from first to last, some battling the red men of the forest, others the Indians of the plains. They all wore buckskin, a serviceable as well as a picturesque garb, they kept their powder dry and managed, in the majority, to stay alive through countless sanguinary conflicts with scalp-hunters. And nowhere, perhaps, have the exploits of backwoodsman and plainsman been so fully recorded as in the old dime and nickel libraries.

Take the spare, not-so-tall, forest-trained Daniel Boone from Pennsylvania, who came to fame in the era when Kentucky and Ohio were the frontier, with flatboats afloat on the "Beautiful River," sometimes being decoyed to destruction by white renegades or actual captives of hidden Indians appealing for help from the wooded shore; Boone, that remarkable man who survived long captivity among the Shawnees, and founded and defended Boonesborough against repeated Indian assault. To find what was probably the first novel written about him, one must turn to the paper backed novelettes of M. M. Ballou, published around the 1850's. No.

108 of Ballou's Novelettes was Rosalthe, or, The Pioneers of Kentucky, by John Hovey Robinson. This was reprinted as Daniel Boone, or, The Pioneers of Kentucky; also reprinted in a pocket-size novel as The Pioneers.

I've always thought that it was Daniel Boone, a young man gradually becoming old as the series progressed, that James Fenimore Cooper had in mind when he wrote of Natty Bumppo (Deerslayer, Hawkeye or whichever of his nicknames you choose) in the famous Leather-stocking Tales. These preceded the Ballou Novelettes, of course, but so far as I know, Daniel Boone himself wasn't named as the hero of a novel until the publication of Dr. Robinson's Rosalthe. I think Robinson was really Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.

Beadle & Adams, following Ballou with their deluge of pioneer literature, featured Daniel Boone in an issue of Beadle's Dime Novels, The Queen of the Woods, or, The Shawnee Captives, by Percy B. St. John, and this was largely biographical. The famous pioneer was also the subject of an issue of Beadle & Adams' Lives of Great Americans, The Life and Times of Colonel Daniel Boone, the Hunter of Kentucky, by Edward S. Ellis. Together with Simon Kenton, his lifelong friend, and Simon Girty, the renegade, Boone, was in Beadle's Dime Library #49, The Wolf Dem-

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Vol. 21 No. 3

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Published Monthly at

821 Vermont Street, Lawrence, Kansas

Edited by

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Assistant Editor

Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Lawrence, Kansas

Price \$2.00 per year

Ad Rates — 6c per word, \$1.00 per inch, quarter page \$2.25, half page \$3.00
and Full Page \$5.00. — 4 times for the price of three.

on, or, *The Queen of the Kanawha*, by Albert W. Aiken, reprinted from an issue of Beadle & Adams' 20 Cent Novels entitled, *Red Arrow, the Wolf Demon, or The Queen of the Kanawha*. Boone stalked the wily Shawnee again in Beadle's Half-Dime Library #355, *The King of the Woods*, or, *Daniel Boone's Last Trail*, by Joseph E. Badger, Jr. But it wasn't the great backwoodsman's last trail as far as dime novels were concerned. He appeared twice in Beadle's Boys Library—#92 of the large-sized edition, *Boone, the Hunter*, or, *The Backwoods Brothers*, by Captain Frederick Whittaker, and this was reprinted as #79 of the small-sized edition.

Frank Tousey put Boone in several issues of *Wide Awake Library*—#152 *Daniel Boone, the Hero of Kentucky*, by Paul Braddon, #713, *Boone and the Renegade*, or, *Life in Kentucky*, by Kit Clyde, #1150, *Daniel Boone's Best Shot*, or, *The Perils of the Kentucky Pioneers*, by John Sherman, and #1186, which was a reprint of #152.

Again Daniel Boone was the hero of *Street & Smith's Log Cabin Library* #125, *The Thunderbolt of the Border*, or, *Daniel Boone on the Warpath*, by Burke Brentford (Nathan D. Urner); and *The Campfire Library* (Street & Smith) published at least two tales about him, #32, *Rifle and Paddle*, or, *The Maid of Old Ticonderoga. A Story of the Days of Daniel Boone*, by Lieut. Henry L. Boone, and #55, *Daniel Boone's Cabin*, or, *The Pioneers of Kentucky. A Great Romance of the Old Border*, by Fred M. Colby. There was a tale of James Harrod, who founded Harrodsburg, Kentucky, in this library: #23, *Harrod, the Silent Hunter*, or, *Perils of the Backwoods Pioneers. A Story of the Old Frontier*, by Lieut. Henry L. Boone. And probably there were historical characters in these issues as well—#29, *The Forest Trailers*, or, *Perilous Times Along the Scioto*, #41, *Backwoods Rangers*, or, *The Kentucky War Trail*, both by Lieut. Henry L. Boone, and #50, *The Iroquois Hunter*, or, *Queen of the Frontier Forest. A Tale of Old Ticonderoga*

and the French, by Lieutenant Keene U.S.A. The Army and Navy Library (Street & Smith) published at least one early frontier tale, #24, *Rifle and Tomahawk*, or, *War to the Knife. A Tale of the Dark and Bloody Ground*, by General E. Morse.

Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton, the tall, rawboned Kentucky ranger (a Virginian by birth) saw much of each other on the early frontier. And, according to Edward S. Ellis, for whose opinion I have a high regard, Kenton had a slight edge on Boone as a forest ranger. It doesn't matter, they were both great frontiersmen, and Kenton assuredly had a thrilling career. There was a time when he traveled under an assumed name, Butler, because of a supposed killing in the settlements. He was probably the only white man whom Simon Girty befriended, after Girty turned against his own race. They had been scouts together, and Girty talked the Indians out of burning Kenton at the stake. Ordinarily, the silent-footed Kenton, armed with tomahawk and Kentucky flint-lock, was a match for any three or four painted Shawnees, but now and then the odds were too great or his luck ran out—temporarily, for, like Daniel Boone, he lived to be an old man.

I'm not certain what was the first story about him, but he appeared three times in Beadle's Pocket Novels: Kenton, the Ranger, or *The Hunted Fawn*, by Captain Charles Howard (T. C. Harbaugh), *The Wood Rangers* (with Simon Girty also in the story), by Emerson Rodman (Edward S. Ellis) and *The Scioto Scouts*, or, *The Shawnee's Decoy*, by Edward Willett. Willett wrote a tale for Beadle's Dime Novels about Colonel George Rogers Clark, for whom Kenton was a scout, in *Abdiel, the Avenger*, or, *The Madman of the Miami*. Simon Kenton, Hunter, by Emerson Rodman (Edward S. Ellis) was a title in Beadle's Boy's Library; and under the Rodman pseudonym, Ellis penned a tale, *Mad Anthony's Scouts*, or, *The Rangers of Kentucky*, for Beadle's Pocket Novels, in which Kenton may have been a character

since General Wayne esteemed him as trail-finder and Indian-fighter.

Another well-known frontiersman, contemporary of Boone and Kenton, was Lews Wetzel; he had a brother Martin, somewhat younger, and massacre of some of their family turned Lew, at least, into an Indian-hater. He was not one to spare the redskins after that, though it occurred during his boyhood. The Shawnees and Wyandots grew to fear this avenging white man, who didn't hesitate to ambush his red enemies. Wetzel had mastered the trick of reloading his Kentucky rifle on the run and he was lightning swift of foot, so that he contrived to keep his own long hair intact through numerous encounters.

He appeared in Munro's Ten Cent Novels #263, Lew Wetzel, the Scout, or, The Captives of the Wilderness, by E. Rodman, who was Edward S. Ellis. The same story turns up in Frank Starr's American Novels, Beadle's Pocket and New Dime Novels, and Nugget Library, with the author given as Captain Hugh Rodman, E. Rodman, Baynton Belknap, etc. The only other dime novel I can find about Lew Wetzel is in Beadle's Frontier Series #38, Mad Anthony's Captain, by Ned Buntline (reprinted from Munro's Ten Cent Novels). This is a tale of General Wayne's campaign in Ohio against the Indians, ending at Fallen Timbers.

Wetzel, an invaluable scout, was chosen by Captain Meriwether Lewis and William Clark (brother of Col. George Rogers Clark) as one of the "long rifles" to head westward with them, but he didn't go clear to the Pacific. In all my searching among dime and nickel libraries I've never come across a novel about the Lewis and Clark expedition, and this is strange, considering the importance of their explorations. Perhaps one was published and I overlooked it.

Boone and Kenton and the other early frontiersmen didn't fare so well in the colored cover weeklies. All that I know of are Pluck and Luck #379, The Unknown Renegade, or, The Three Great Scouts (Daniel

Boone is one, James Harrod another and the third called Clarke, possibly meant to be George Rogers Clark, though the full name isn't given), and this story may be a reprint of Wide Awake Library #713, Boone and the Renegade; the reprint from Wide Awake #1150 of Daniel Boone's Best Shot in Pluck and Luck #536; The Liberty Boys and Simon Kenton and the Liberty Boys With Daniel Boone, in #287 and #309 respectively of The Liberty Boys of '76 (both new stories by Cecil Burleigh), and the reprints from Beadle and Munro in Beadle's Frontier Series.

There were, however, numerous stories of Boone and Kenton's time in Pluck and Luck—Red Jacket, or, The Boys of the Farmhouse Fort (#189), The Block House Boys, or, The Young Pioneers of the Great Lakes (#549), In Peril of Pontiac, or, The Boys of the Frontier Fort (#594), The Boy Scouts of the Susquehanna, or, The Young Heroes of the Wyoming Valley (#746). And perhaps one or two in All Around Weeklies.

Davy Crockett followed Boone and Kenton for an all too brief but thrilling turn on the stage of the American wilderness. He first gained fame as a bear hunter in the Tennessee canebrake. Later, with Andrew Jackson (Old Hickory), he fought the Creeks after the massacre of Fort Mims. His flintlock spoke at the defeat of Weatherford, the great Creek chief, in the battle of Horseshoe Bend, Alabama. Then there was a respite from frontier fighting when he was elected a Congressman. Davy was naturally quick-witted, humorous; he even wrote an autobiography, which, of course, did not give an account of the greatest moment of his life—he never lived to tell of it. Going to Texas, then waging a fight for independence, Crockett made his last stand with the handful of heroes of the Alamo against Santa Anna's army.

He was a favorite historical character with Edward S. Ellis, who wrote the Life and Adventures of Colonel David Crockett for Beadle & Adams'

Lives of Great Americans. Beadle's Dime Novels #231 was *The Texan Trapper*, or, *Davy Crockett's Last Bear Hunt*, Ellis writing of him again under the pen-name "Charles E. Lasalle," and from the title it probably dealt with Davy's adventures in Texas. It is certain that this one did, in Beadle & Adams' 20 Cent Novels, *The Prairie Mazeppa*, or, *The Madman of the Plains. A Strange Story of the Texas Frontier*, by Albert W. Aiken. Beadle's New Dime Novels contained a story, *The Bear Hunter*, or, *Davy Crockett as a Spy*, by Harry Hazard, and this may be Ellis again, using a pseudonym. Ellis wrote one other that I'm sure of, for Beadle's Boy's Library (small size) #139, *Colonel Crockett, the Bear King*, by Charles E. Lasalle. And Crockett appeared in Beadle's Half-Dime Library #266, *Killb'ar, the Guide*, or, *Davy Crockett's Crooked Trail*, by Ensign Charles Dudley Warren.

Wide Awake Library (Tousey) published two about Davy: #652, *Young Davy Crockett*, or, *The Hero of Silver Gulch*, by Wild Bill (a pseudonym, of course) and #729, *Davy Crockett's Vow*, or, *His Last Shot for Vengeance* by Kit Clyde (likely this was one of the few novels relating to his death at the Alamo). In colored covers, Pluck and Luck reprinted *Young Davy Crockett*, or, *The Hero of Silver Gulch* as #213; #372 was *Davy Crockett, Jr.*, or, *"Be Sure You're Right, Then Go Ahead"*, by an Old Scout (one of those fictitious boy heroes named for a real frontiersman, but at least he used Col. Crockett's well-known motto; probably a reprint, but I'm not sure); finally, there was #412, *Dead Game*, or *Davy Crockett's Double*, which may be a reprint, too. One other item I can mention is *Davy Crockett's Boy Hunter* #11 of Beadle's Frontier Series.

The trappers and fur traders of the far West were the heroes of many a dime novel. One of the most famous of these mountain men seems to have had but a single novel devoted to him—Jim Bridger, sometimes called "Old Gabe," a great Indian-fighter and trapper captain, first white man

to report the Great Salt Lake and the wonders of the Yellowstone country, which weren't at first believed. He established Fort Bridger, Wyoming, and the Army of the Frontier often required his services. Yet the only record of him that I can find in the old libraries is #225 of Munro's Ten Cent Novels, entitled, *Old Jim Bridger*. It's quite possible, of course, that he is a character in other novels which do not bear his name.

Kit Carson, that small but mighty mountain man, scout, Indian-fighter and all-round frontiersman, fared much better in the libraries. He steps onto our wilderness stage after Davy Crockett's heroic exit—a young trapper, Kit has been awaiting his cue in the wings. I've sometimes wondered that there wasn't a weekly issued in his name, detailing his adventures. Kit certainly knew the West at its wildest, he fought the Northern Plains tribes, and the Southern Plains tribes as well. Yet they had a high regard for him, and so did most white men who were his contemporaries. A quiet man, but deadly in a pinch, that was Kit. The flintlock had been replaced as a weapon by the percussion-cap rifle, and the Colt's revolving pistol came into use while Carson was riding the Santa Fe Trail. Those were the days of buffalos by the millions and painted Kiowas lying in wait for the unwary—Kiowas and Comanches and Apaches, hundreds of them.

I will mention first a Kit Carson story in De Witt's Ten Cent Novels #113, *Kit Carson's Raid*, or, *The Scouts of the Frontier*, by Henry L. Williams Jr. This was reprinted, same title and author, in #20 of Street & Smith's Campfire Library, and others followed in that publication: #37, *Kit Carson's Pledge*, or, *The Prince of the Gold Hunters. A Powerful Romance of Gallant Kit Carson*, by Charles A. Averill, #52, *Kit Carson's Trail*, or, *The Hunters of the Rockies. A Startling Tale of the Famous Pathfinder*, by Charles A. Averill (while you could call Carson a "pathfinder," I think the title is most often applied to General John C. Fremont,

with whom Kit explored many parts of the West), #57, Kit Carson's Gold Train, or, Wild Adventures in the Sierras. A Great Tale of California in the Early Days, by Charles A. Averill. The late Mr. W. C. Miller once informed me that the Kit Carson

stories by Charles A. Averill were published in book form long before the dime novel was invented. Averill was writing as early as 1846, which, of course, was during Carson's lifetime.

(to be continued)

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Most of these were uncut when I received them, but as they are my favorite detective stories, cut some of them so I could read them. For you collectors who like brilliant fine copies, this is your chance. Money back guarantee.

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NEWSY NEWS

By Ralph F. Cummings

P. J. Moran wrote an article for the Sat. Eve. Post Dec. 6, 1952, page 12, "There Was Expert Space Predicting Long Before the Buck Rogers' Era." Should of been "There Were Prophets in Those Days, Too," but the publishers changed it to the first title instead. Sure is very good, I'll say.

Here is more bad news to come, with the loss of four of our H. H. Bro. members, as follows—

Lacey D. Irwin, Kane, Ill., died Dec. 16th, 1952.

Jesse Harriman, Worcester, Mass., died Dec. 23rd, 1952.

J. B. Herndon, died Jan. 5th, 1953.

Raymond L. Caldwell died Jan. 10th, 1953.

So fellows, we are going to miss them all.

Ray Caldwell was our largest collector, of which his personal collection will be preserved for future generations by some library, but his duplicates and other material not connected with his collection, will be given to Ralph Smith to sell for Mrs. Caldwell. Ray was 57 years old, and really never got over his operation ast July. J. B. Herndon was a Henty collector, and had just come into the H. H. Brotherhood last July. Jesse Harriman, age 51, was a Joseph C. Lincoln book collector. Lacey D. Irwin, was an all round collector some years ago, but hasn't done much collecting in late years.

Ray was well known all over the U. S. A. as well as foreign countries. Although he enjoyed his hobby, his sickness held him back a lot, and he will be missed by all, everywhere.

When I, your Newsy News editor, first knew him, it was way back in 1925 or thereabouts, when we came in contact with him, and the many deals we had together I shall never forget him, or any one else. Long live the spirit of Ray Caldwell and every one else that has gone to the country of no return.

Los Angeles Times, Sunday, Feb. 8, 1953. Part 2, page 5, had a fine art-

icle called "The Dime Novel Could Be Had for a Nickel" by Ray Zeman, with 2 fine illustrations of Nick Carter Library #179 The Counterfeiters Gold Tooth and Beadles Dime Library #573 The Witch of Shasta. Sure is a very fine article. Anyone wanting a copy send 25¢ to the Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles, Calif.

Bob Smeltzer is back with us again Pals, as he is trying to get his hands back in working the typewriter keys once more. Has been bothered with arthritis so long that now he is trying to get back to his old self once more, so let's all wish him the best of luck all around.

Your editor, Edward T. LeBlanc, took a fine trip to sunny Bermuda for the christening of his new niece, for 2 weeks. He is now back, and I'm sure he'll always remember that trip. His brother is in the air service and is stationed out there.

(Advertisements)

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Wanted to Buy: Comrades and All Around. Please list condition and price. L. D. Webster, 124 Tompkins Street, Cortland, New York.

WANTED

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